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JAPAN

ANCIENT BUDDHIST PAINTINGS

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ANCIENT BUDDHIST PAINTINGS

PREFACE

SERGE ELISSÉEFF

INTRODUCTION

TAKAAKI MATSUSHITA



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Japanese art has been known in Europe down to the present day principally through nineteenth-century paintings and prints. The masterpieces of the earlier historical periods have remained all but unknown. The number of Westerners in a position to study them has been extremely limited. Fortunately, in recent years, exhibitions of Japanese art organized abroad by the Government of Japan have given the public at large an opportunity to see these works and to appreciate their beauty. The present album will enable the reader to acquaint himself more closely with the artistic production of that remote period and to understand it better, thanks to the descriptive text of Mr. Matsushita, whose scholarly commentaries bring out clearly the aesthetic qualities of these important paintings.

In Japan, as in many other countries, art was at the outset closely associated with a foreign religious cult. The Buddhist clergy, trained by the Chinese and the Koreans, succeeded to an astonishing extent in adapting both art and doctrines to Japanese requirements. This world religion in its Chinese form was brought to Japan in 538 A.D. by the Korean clergy, who had been converted to Buddhism during the fourth century. The Japanese aristocracy of the Yamato court had been in contact with Chinese civilization since the beginning of the sixth century, when a number of Korean scholars arrived in Japan, bringing Chinese books with them. In 538, the Korean emissary brought

from the King of Paekche a new message which states: "This doctrine is the most excellent of all... It establishes rewards and retributions without measure and without limit... Every prayer is granted, nothing is lacking." The ruler of Japan was deeply impressed by this royal letter and by the beauty of what the Koreans presented to him; but he did not dare to adopt this foreign religion in the face of the opposition of the leading families, who were traditionally nationalist. Nevertheless the Soga clan was in favour of Buddhism as a State religion, taking the view that the imperial house would stand to gain in prestige if it brought Japan into line with the other Buddhist countries of the Far East. Differences of opinion gave rise to internal disorders. Nonetheless the number of Buddhists among the higher nobility steadily increased, and in 587 the Emperor Yōmei, then seriously ill, embraced the foreign religion in defiance of advice of the nationalist clans. In the autumn of the same year the Emperor died. His brother Sushun mounted the throne and war broke out between the clans. The nationalists were defeated and political control was assumed entirely by the Soga clan. Buddhism had triumphed. The imperial court sent to Korea for Buddhist monks, who came, bringing relics with them. They were accompanied by groups of craftsmen — carpenters, sculptors, tile-makers and painters. The Japanese, apt pupils that they were, familiarized themselves with the new crafts but managed at the same time to preserve their own peculiar skill and national taste. The Empress Suiko (593-629) came to the throne and appointed her nephew, Prince Shōtoku (574-622), as Regent. He, a man of deep and sincere faith, gave a powerful impulse to the development of Buddhism. In the region around the capital he built a series of temples in which sculptors and painters displayed their talents to the full. The Prince Regent took an active interest in the cultural side of the new religion, founded schools and set up, in the shrines, statues of Śākyamuni, the historical Buddha who, by his life and his sacrifices in his previous existences, had brought salvation to men. This interest in the life of Buddha inspired the painters of the scrolls illustrating the text of the *Sūtra* of Causes and Effects and depicting various episodes of the life of Prince Siddhārta (Pl. u-a and u-b). In the paintings which adorn the Tamamushi no Zushi shrine (Pl. 1) the artist has depicted scenes from two *jātakas* in which the future Buddha appears. Although the style of these paintings resembles that of certain Korean works, the pictorial composition, with its attenuated accents, reveals an artistic feeling which is typically Japanese.

In many important temples the central altar is occupied by Yakushi Nyōrai (Bhaishajyaguru), the Healing Buddha, while frequently the main altar is allotted to the Bodhisattva Kannon (Avalokiteśvara), the Compassionate One, who assuages the sufferings of the believer. Other temples are consecrated to the Buddha of the world to come, the Miroku (Maitreya) who bestows eternal bliss upon the believer who implores his aid.

These great divinities were highly popular from the very beginnings of Buddhism, and their iconography follows closely the rules established in China as well as in India and preserved in the text of the *sūtras*. At the same time, the artists of Nara introduced Japanese elements into the composition, in particular the endeavour to create a link between the believer and the divinity, as

revealed in the slightly inclined posture of the body, the expression of the face and many other barely perceptible details. The image as a whole breathes a spirit of compassion for the worshipper. In the mural paintings of Hōryū-ji the painters follow foreign models similar to those of the rock temples of Central Asia, but to anyone who is familiar with Japanese art certain details reveal slight modifications which have been introduced by Japanese taste. Throughout one is conscious of the endeavour not to lose the spiritual link established by faith between the god and the worshipper. In the lines of the decoration, as well as in the composition of the ornamentation, the Japanese painter displays a rhythm that is replete with elegance and lightness. The artist follows the iconography established by the texts and the Chinese or Korean models which he is obliged to copy, but he does not lose sight of the fact that in Japan the light is different and that, in the interior of the Japanese temples with their far-projecting eaves, the paintings are illumined by a gentle half-light which modifies the scale of colours. Towards the ixth century he frequently enhances his colouring by sticking little patches or strips of gold leaf onto his paintings, thereby bringing out the glowing tones.

In the vmth century the influence of the Buddhist clergy became more and more powerful and government officials as well as the ruler himself began to look for some way of evading the pressure of the numerous monasteries in the capital, Nara. The situation was complicated by the fact that in the course of that century a considerable number of new sects of a mystical character arrived from China. The Japanese monks who had gone to the mainland of Asia to carry out their studies returned, bringing with them many statues and paintings in addition to an impressive number of Chinese books.

A political and social change took place when, in 794, the capital was transferred to Kyōto. The esoteric sects known as Tendai and Shingon occupied a preponderant position in the new capital and religious painting followed, in all its details, the new complex and rigid iconography. In the pantheon with its manifold spiritual emanations the various divinities symbolized divine power, protection and defence against evil, along with a considerable number of theological ideas. The new symbolism is extremely difficult to comprehend for anyone who is not acquainted with Shingon iconography and who, like the majority of Westerners, is accustomed to a quite different choice of subjects to symbolize abstract ideas. What would we say of a man who tried to understand Western medieval painting without a knowledge of Bible history or of the lives of the Apostles and Saints? A Westerner finds himself in the same situation when confronted with the Shingon paintings in which Powerful Bodhisattvas, depicted under grim and angry forms, figure as the protectors of the faithful, or when the possibilities of a god's multiple activities are indicated, in defiance of anatomical truth, by a plurality of heads or eyes and an impressive number of arms. Guided by religious discipline, the Japanese painter follows piously all the details which are imposed on him by a mystical iconography; but by dint of artistic sense and talent he gives his image a harmonious, rhythmical composition. He succeeds in conveying the impressive calm, the soothing tranquillity of certain divinities, while his portrayals of others are notable for their movement and for their

dynamic, powerful gesture. The colours, too, of these Shingon pictures have symbolical and mystical significance which enhance their aesthetic and religious value.

The *mandalas* (*mandara* in Japanese) — which are diagrams representing the structure of the world in its two aspects, the spiritual and the material — are intelligible only to the initiated. The profane can do no more than admire the ingenuity of the Japanese painter, who, although bound by traditional models, often succeeds in making these compositions into works of great beauty. He triumphs over many difficulties and succeeds in expressing his artistic taste, while conforming with the precise rules which are imposed on him (Pl. xv). The nine divinities of the *Rengebu-in* group (Pl. v) are remarkable for the variety of their expressions and the grace of their poses. This xth-century painting reveals the surprising level of accomplishment attained by the painters who worked for the large monasteries. The creator of such a work was not an imitator of established models but an artist of great talent and of deeply religious feeling.

Japanese society was not yet at this period crushed by a Confucian discipline, and expressed its feelings without constraint. The painters strove to give expression to all the elements of human life. In the painting depicting the disappearance of the Buddha's mortal integument, the grief, distress and tears of his disciples and of the heavenly figures, human beings and animals, in the presence of the lifeless remains, are represented with astonishing intensity (Pl. xi, xii, xiii).

Not all the artists were monks. A considerable number of them belonged to high society and were in the service of the Court. The nobility of this period led a gay and elegant life in luxurious palaces with fine gardens. They spent their leisure in the reading of novels, the composition of poetry, competitions in painting and in meetings for the appreciation of the delicate fragrance of various kinds of incense. This way of life of the imperial Court and the aristocracy has been described in the numerous stories and novels of the xth and xith centuries. At this period, illustrated scrolls were fashionable. There were scrolls with Buddhist texts interspersed with illustrations, as well as scrolls illustrating well-known stories and novels. Plates xxvi and xxvii reproduce two sections of the celebrated scroll illustrating the literary masterpiece of the period, the novel of Prince Genji, written by Lady Murasaki Shikibu at the beginning of the xth century. This novel, which has been brilliantly translated into English by Arthur Waley, gives a detailed description of the luxurious and romantic life of the Kyōto Court. The style of these scrolls offers an excellent example of the *Yamato-e*. The power of the colours is astonishing, and the manner in which they are juxtaposed reveals an extremely refined taste. As always with the Japanese painters of this period, the action of the characters is only delicately suggested, and the composition as a whole conveys very faithfully the particular atmosphere of each episode. It is the tradition of the Japanese painter to represent the invisible through the choice of visible forms and the heightening of certain elements of the composition.

Apart from this high aristocracy, the capital attracted the middle class and the provincial nobility, who frequently came to Kyōto to visit their relatives or their clan chiefs. People of a modest manner of life could find no spiritual satisfaction in ostentatious religious ceremonies and complic-



ated rites, any more than in the mystical doctrines of the 'Sect of the True Word' (Shingon-shū). What they required was a compassionate Buddha who would bestow salvation upon them in return for the sincerity of their faith. A new sect arose, bringing hope to this social stratum. It proclaimed faith in the Amida, the Merciful One, who has vowed not to enter Nirvāna before he has saved all mankind. Amida promised every sincere believer that he would come for him at the moment of his death and take him to his paradise in the West. These Buddhist texts inspired the painters and sculptors, who created a new iconography of the descent of Amida. A number of historians of Japanese art have studied this new iconography. According to them, the problem confronting the painter is to bring out the spiritual relation existing between the compassionate divinity and the believer at the hour of his death. These relations play a fundamental rôle at the last moment, when the believer is leaving the material world. In these paintings the landscape of the Japanese hills, with their harmonious lines, is depicted at the tranquil hour of sunset, which evokes the idea of Amida's paradise in the West. The notion of spiritual bonds is reinforced by the ceremony according to which, in order to establish visual contact with Amida, the pious Buddhist at the moment of death must hold in his hands five threads of coloured silk fastened to the joined hands of the great divinity. The attendant figure kneeling at Amida's left hand, the compassionate Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, a benevolent expression upon his face, holds in his hands a lotus flower to receive the dying man's soul and transport it to paradise.

In the case of the scrolls with paintings illustrating legendary and historical subjects (Pl. XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI), the painter was not bound by iconographical rules; he could give free rein to his artistic imagination and follow unreservedly the dynamism of his brush. Another aspect of the Japanese spirit enters thereby into direct communication with mankind and offers us an astonishingly vigorous and lively image of events from Kyōto life or of the strange miracles performed by the spiritual strength of a Buddhist monk. Nothing escapes the observant eye of the Japanese painters, who, in these illustrated scrolls, depict the weaknesses and mishaps of their contemporaries with a host of picturesque details. Under the cloak of allegory they venture to laugh at the lives of the clergy and the nobility. Their brush, in precise, vibrant lines, depicts in slightly caricatured form monkeys, hares and other animals imitating the activities of the members of the upper classes. Who are the individuals who are concealed beneath these innocuous animal forms? The painter's contemporaries probably recognized them without great difficulty, but to us they remain unknown. What counts for us are the aesthetic qualities, the composition and the beauty of the calligraphic brush-stroke (p. 17).

Portraits, in these remote centuries, were executed with remarkable delicacy. This genre enabled the Japanese artists to express their respect for the eminent monks and the great men of their country. The artist strives not merely to depict the individual but to represent him in a typical posture, to seize an important moment of his life and to immortalize his characteristic features on silk and paper. It is for him a means of conveying a spiritual tension which is important in the eyes of the pious spectator. The Chinese monk Tz'u-ên (in Japanese, Jion) is depicted (Pl. XXI)

in an attitude of religious concentration and serene calm; the priest Zemmui, whose portrait dates from a later period, is represented in an attitude of intense prayer and deep meditation (Pl. xxii); the third portrait reproduced in the present work shows us the great preacher, the founder of the 'Sect of the True Word', the monk Gonzō, delivering a sermon (Pl. xxiii). The painter is concerned with conveying, by the priest's posture, the gestures of his hands and the expression of his face, the vitality of the great master and the power of his personality.

These qualities, which are always present in the Japanese portrait-painters, are readily visible in the fine portraits of the high dignitaries of the imperial Court of Kyōto in their official robes of black silk, of which the present work offers an excellent example in Plate xxiv.

Important changes in taste and in the choice of subject-matter reveal themselves in the period following the seizure of political power by the Minamoto family and the transfer of the administration from Kyōto northward to Kamakura. New social forms were now making their appearance in national life. The military class assumed power and began to play a rôle of the first importance. The imperial epoch had for more than six centuries given the nobility a luxurious and brilliant life. Now Kyōto was to lose its official importance; but artistic values were not abandoned. The established aesthetic foundations of music, literature and the fine arts served as bases for the artists of the coming generations. For during these six centuries Japanese taste had been formed, the national religion and Buddhism had directed it towards a deep and sincere appreciation of the beauty of surrounding nature. The mystical sects and their art had awakened spiritual sensibility, and the sermons of the priests of the Amida sect had reinforced the values of human life. The philosophical ideas of Buddhism had endowed Japanese thought with delicate, subtle forms which have never been abandoned. Japanese artists, despite the political and social changes which the powerful military class introduced in the xiii century, have never given up either the rich aesthetic heritage which they received from the mainland of Asia or the refinement which they acquired during the centuries of the Empire.

These various elements, which the Japanese painters succeeded in assimilating and enhancing through their individual genius, made possible in Japan the development of an art of profound sensibility and delicate beauty, of which the present album reproduces examples belonging to the treasures of a number of Buddhist temples not readily accessible even to visitors to Japan.

SERGE ELISSÉEFF



Buddhism played a very important part in the early history of Japanese art. In all architecture, sculpture and painting, the important existing examples are almost universally Buddhist. This is because Buddhism, from its introduction to Japan from the Asian Continent, won fervent faith, and the continental culture accompanying it spread widely through the centuries. Japan through its early historic periods was eager to learn Chinese civilization, notably the culture associated with Buddhism. The evolution of Japanese art, therefore, had close connection with that of Buddhist art in continental China.

Roughly speaking, the Japanese art of the early historic periods is characterized by the influence of the art of the different corresponding Chinese periods: the Asuka from the Chinese Period of Six Dynasties (notably of Northern Wei), the Hakuho from the Sui and early T'ang, the Tempyo from the florescent T'ang, and the early Heian (the Jogan) from the middle to late T'ang. Of course, the transplanted religious culture achieved a distinctive development in Japan.

Especially in the mid-Heian Period (after A.D. 894), during which all official communication with the continent was suspended, the trend toward Japanization was evident, and art in pure Japanese style began to flower in full bloom in about the xth century. It should be noted, however, that the last part of this late Heian Period, namely after the second half of the xth century, began to reveal the influence of Chinese art of the Sung Dynasty (960-1279). Such stages of the history of Japanese Buddhist art are amply illustrated by existing examples of painting.

The oldest existing specimens of Buddhist painting in Japan are the colour paintings on the wooden panels of the Tamamushi Shrine and its pedestal in the Horyu-ji, Nara. Made about a century after the official introduction of Buddhism in 538, they represent painting in the Asuka Period (vth to mid-vnth centuries). They are executed on black-lacquered panels with pigments blended with oil and litharge. Pl. 1 shows a *jataka* scene, painted in gentle, fluent brushwork on one of the sides of its pedestal. Its subject is a story that a prince (the incarnation of the Buddha Shaka in the "past world"), finding a hungry tiger just about to eat its cubs, threw himself down to feed them. The rocks, trees and figures in this scene well illustrate the characteristics of the Six Dynasties. At the time numerous craftsmen had come to Japan from China and Korea. It is possible that these paintings were done by one of those immigrants or their descendants.

The Hakuho or early Nara Period (middle to late vnth century) is represented by the wall-paintings in the Main Hall at Horyu-ji, Nara (late vnth century). The paintings on the twelve major walls in this building were unfortunately badly damaged by fire in 1948. The style of these wall-paintings is entirely different from that of the Asuka Period. The lines delineating the images in them are powerful ones termed "wire lines" (*tessen-byō*), which are elastic and even in breadth like wire. Shading gives the paintings an effect of depth. Shading was in frequent use in Central Asia, and early Chinese Buddhist painting emphasized drawing. We may probably presume that the Central

Asian style, introduced to China during the Sui or early T'ang, was combined with the traditional Chinese style, and that this combination, in turn introduced to Japan, gave birth to such paintings. Fortunately the twenty smaller walls near the ceiling in the Main Hall, with paintings showing apsaras (heavenly maidens, p. 5), have survived. The beautiful figures of the heavenly maidens in flight are good enough to suggest the original splendour of the wall-paintings before the fire.

The Tempyō or late Nara Period (viii century) was a period in which Buddhism, centred around the capital, Nara, thrived as never before, and in which the importation of T'ang culture was the most extensive. The Shōsō-in Repository of Imperial treasures, Nara, still preserves numerous artifacts bespeaking the florid culture of the period. Many grand governmental temples and "family temples" of the nobility, such as the Tōdai-ji and Kōfuku-ji, were constructed one after another, causing a great increase in the demand for Buddhist statues for worship therein and paintings to glorify the rituals. In addition to artists working at governmental art institutions, many private painters were active. Unfortunately there remain only a few examples of Buddhist painting of the time.

First mention among Buddhist paintings of the Tempyō Period should be given to the *Illustrated Inga-kyō* (Sūtra of Cause and Effect in the Past and Present), reproduced in Pl. II. This dates from about the middle of the viii century, but stylistically it appears to have been based upon a Chinese prototype from the viii or viii century. It is a set of horizontal scrolls with the text of the scripture, describing the lives of Shaka (Śākyamuni) in the "past and present worlds", on the lower halves, and its illustrations on the upper halves. Of the original set several scrolls now remain scattered in different collections. Reproduced here are two sections of the scroll owned by the Jōbon Rendai-ji, Kyōto. Pl. II-a shows a scene in which Prince Siddhārta (later the Buddha Shaka) is enjoying sport in the palace, and Pl. II-b the prince going out through the palace gate on a horse. Bright colours remain largely intact. Though simple in depiction, they are interesting examples of scroll-form painting consisting of continuous scenes.

Literary sources tell that large-sized Buddhist pictures in painting and embroidery were produced in good quantities in this period, but existing specimens are very few. The most important of those few is the *Hokkedō Kompon Mandara* in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, showing Shaka preaching at the Sacred Mountain. Though repaired to a considerable degree during the xiii century, it clearly reveals the skill of a Nara Period artist following the Chinese style. The landscape in its background, especially, gives evidence of the direct influence of T'ang landscape art. Dating from the last part of this period is the image of Kichijō Ten (Mahāśrī) in the Yakushi-ji, Nara. It represents the Buddhist goddess in the guise of a noble lady in T'ang style dress. Depicted gracefully and very elaborately, this relatively small-sized piece typifies the maturity of painting in the Tempyō Period. The famous Shōsō-in houses a number of art treasures which the Empress Kōmyō (701-760), consort of Emperor Shōmu (699-756), dedicated, after the death of the Emperor, to the Great Buddha Statue at the Tōdai-ji. The nuclei of the collection here are objects used

personally by the Emperor during his lifetime, and ritual implements used at the consecration ceremony of the Great Buddha Statue held in 752. Among the treasures there are a few Buddhist paintings and drawings, but the majority of the paintings have secular subjects. The folding-screen with the image of a beautiful lady standing under a tree, which resembles the above-mentioned Kichijō Ten but is still richer in the T'ang style; the scenes of hunting and music-playing painted on the *kanbachi* (plectrum-guard) of lyres; the landscape on hemp cloth, and various others reveal the style of painting in the second half of the VIIIth century.

The capital moved from Nara to Heian (Kyōto) in 794, and political as well as social renovation took place. The early Heian Period (IXth century) following this event was characterized by the rise of the Shingon Sect of Esoteric Buddhism newly introduced from China, and of the new type of art associated with this sect. The Esoteric Buddhism was brought back by Kūkai (774-835), Ennin (794-864) and other priests who studied in T'ang China during the IXth century. This new type of Buddhism, which flourished in China at the time, was quite different from the previous scholastic sects. It laid importance on mysterious exorcising rites, and was rich in the occult religious atmosphere which appealed forcefully to people's minds. Japan in its social conditions at the time was ready to accept this new approach. Because images of Buddhist deities, either in sculpture or in painting, were indispensable for the Esoteric Buddhism as objects of worship in its services, the spread of the new sect inevitably caused the rise and development of Esoteric Buddhist art. The art of the Esoteric Buddhism of this period, reflecting the spirit of the age and the character of esotericism, made a dignified, powerful effect. In style it chiefly followed Chinese Esoteric art of the late T'ang. Japanese priests who studied in China brought back many T'ang paintings and iconographic prototypes, which served as models for Japanese colour paintings. As the observance of Esoteric services became frequent, Esoteric painting achieved a notable progress.

The highest in religious importance among Esoteric paintings were mandalas or graphic hierarchic diagrams of Buddhist divinities, known in Japan as *Ryōkai Mandara* (Mandala of the Two Circles), namely Mandala of Kongō-kai (Vajradhātu, "diamond circle", the realm of spirit) based upon the Kongōchō-kyō (Vajrasūtra), and of Taizō-kai (Garbhadhātu, "womb circle", the realm of material universe) based upon the Dainichi-kyō. Mandalas were the basic sources of iconographic reference in portraying Buddhist deities. The Jingo-ji, Kyōto, owns the oldest existing pair of *Ryōkai Mandara* dating from the Tencho era (824-833). These are drawn in gold and silver ink on purplish dark-blue diagonal-weave silk. The drawing is precise, dignified and noble, and its excellent brushwork bears resemblance to T'ang work. This pair is to be called the top masterpiece of Buddhist painting in this period. The subject pair is not coloured, but in principle mandalas should be in colour painting. The eldest existing mandala in colours is the pair owned by the Kyōōgokoku-ji (popularly known as Tō-ji) in Kyōto, which retains its original bright colours quite well. It is notable that this pair shows much of an exotic effect revealing continental influence, as can be noticed in its deep, bright colours, its conspicuous *kumadori* ("shading", gradated colouring

along the inside of contour lines), the rounded faces of the deities and their eyebrows connected in continued curves. Reproduced in Pl. v is the lower half of the section called *Rengebu-in* in the *Taizō-kai Mandara*, well showing the above-mentioned characteristics.

As for independent images of different deities, the oldest example now existing is the set of twelve paintings portraying Jūni Ten, the twelve protective gods of Buddhism, painted in the mid-ixth century and owned by the Saidai-ji, Nara. Presenting the gods in large figures occupying nearly the whole of the canvasses, and painted with emphatic use of the primary colours, these paintings are powerful masterpieces carrying the mysterious vigour of the Esoteric Buddhism. Their drawing, done chiefly in fine, delicately curving lines, and the forms and colours of the clouds floating around the images, indicate the influence of late T'ang art. The famous *Go Dai Rikiku* (Five Powerful Bodhisattvas) at Kōya, Wakayama and the *Ki Fudō* (Yellow Acala) in the Onjō-ji, Shiga, both from the last part of this period (end of the ixth century), are typical specimens of the awe-inspiring images so characteristic of Esoteric Buddhist painting. Of the former five paintings, two have been lost, the surviving three being *Kongō-ku* (Pl. iii), *Ryūō-ku* and *Muijū Rikiku* (Pl. iv). They are all gigantic, well-muscled figures filling the large pictures, with an effect of over-powering vigour. *Kongō-ku*, the central figure of the five, is the finest of them.

Attention should be paid also to the images of the priests Ryūmyō and Ryūchi in the Tō-ji, Kyōto. The priest Kūkai, on his return to Japan in 806, brought back with him the images of Five Forefathers of Shingon Buddhism painted by the famous T'ang painter, Li Chên. The two paintings under discussion were done in 821 in Japan after the Chinese prototypes. Faithfully following the T'ang style, they are the oldest as well as the finest of "patriarch portraits".

The late Heian Period, covering about three hundred years from the xth century, is also known in art history as the Fujiwara Period. The practice of sending Imperial messengers to T'ang China was suspended in 894, and Japanese art thereafter ceased to receive continental influences, with the result that culture in general, art included, saw the spread of native Japanese taste. The nobility centred around the Fujiwara family enjoyed a rich, favourable life devoted to delicate aesthetic sentiments. Reflecting the taste of the nobility, the art of this period was florid, elegant and effeminate. Of this long period of three centuries, the xth century, in which the Fujiwaras were at the height of their prosperity, was the mature stage of art as well. Buddhism was influential in the nobility's everyday life. Many temples were built and Buddhist statues and paintings made by the nobility, and Buddhist art flourished greatly. The Esoteric Buddhism continued to be in power, while the Jōdo or Pure Land (Paradise) Faith, believing in rebirth in the paradise of the Buddha Amida (Amitābha), also became popular. The majority of existing specimens of Buddhist painting from this period belong to either of these two sects.

Secular painting also became popular among the nobility. Besides such large-sized paintings as those on sliding-screens, sliding-doors and folding-screens, smaller paintings for purely artistic ap-



preciation, mostly in the form of horizontal scrolls or booklets, were widely enjoyed. It is to be noted that while earlier secular paintings of the style termed *Kara-e* ("Chinese painting") showed Chinese-style subjects in T'ang-style depiction, there arose a new type called *Yamato-e* ("Japanese painting") dealing with Japanese landscapes and manners.

The xth century was a transition from the style richly fused with T'ang mode to the native Fujiwara style. There remain only a few specimens of painting from this period, among which the panel paintings inside the Five-storied Pagoda, Daigo-ji, Kyōto, built in 951, are the only dated examples. Their main subjects are the *Ryōkai Mandara* and the Eight Forefathers of Shingon Buddhism. Pl. vi and vii show portions of wooden boards covering the central pillar of the pagoda. The dark "shading" on the images and their robes attests to the tradition of the Chinese-style technique still at work, but the modest, graceful appearances of the deities, the "flat and clear" colouring, and the use of *kirikane* ("cut goldleaf", thin, thread-like strips of gold leaf applied instead of drawn lines) indicate the approach of the new xth century style.

It is considered that the florescence of the Fujiwara nobles from the late xth to mid-xth centuries was also the peak of splendour of painting. However, there is no clearly datable specimen of this epoch prior to the wall and door paintings in the Hōō-dō (Phoenix Hall) at the Byōdō-in, Kyōto, built in 1053. The Phoenix Hall was constructed by Fujiwara Yorimichi (992-1074), the master of the Fujiwara family, in his villa in what was then a suburb of Kyōto City. The hall, the statue

of Amida inside it, and the lotus pond in front of it, symbolize the palace and the garden in Amida's Pure Land (paradise). On the wooden doors and walls in this building are painted the scenes of *raigō* ("coming to welcome"), that is, the Buddha Amida and his heavenly host coming down to earth to receive his devotees to his paradise as described in the Kan Muryōju-gyō Sūtra. These are valuable specimens of painting in the mid-Fujiwara. They are much damaged and their colouring has been retouched in many spots, but those on the doors remain in a relatively fine state of preservation. Shown in them are the *raigō* scenes, with Japanese-style landscapes below. Their style, reflecting the taste of the nobility, is elegant and generous. Pl. x shows a portion of the *raigō* scene on the door in the north side one of the three front doorways (the building faces east). Colours remain well on the figures here. A pleasant effect of spirited depiction is presented in the easy, well-balanced figures of the deities and the light, warm tone of the colours.

Comparison with these door-paintings enables us to name a few other master works datable stylistically in the mid-Fujiwara period. The *Ryōkei Mandara* in the Kojima-dera, Nara (early xth century), like the above-mentioned pair in the Jingo-ji, are drawn in gold and silver on dark-blue silk; they show a powerful, florid style. The Amida (Pl. viii), in the *Raigō of the Amida Triad* owned by the Hokke-ji, Nara, is characterized by its impressive composition and its ample, graceful figure; in the style of depiction, the colouring and the decorative patterns on its clothing, it has an effect slightly more antique than that of the door-paintings in the Phoenix Hall. The *Dai-itoku Myōō* (Atavika) in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, and the *Ao Fudō* (Blue Acala) in the Shōren-in, Kyōto, are excellent specimens portraying the awesome deities in very powerful styles. Pl. ix reproduces *Seitaka Dōji* (Cetaka), one of the two messengers in the *Ao Fudō* painting. It is a vivid portrayal in lavish employment of sharp, forceful lines and matching bright colours.

Typical of Buddhist painting in the second half of the xth century is the famous *Nirvāna* (Pl. xi-xiii) dated 1086. It shows the Buddha Shaka (Śākyamuni) quietly lying on his death-bed, and heavenly and earthly beings in sorrow around him. Its composition is very well designed and its colours are beautiful, creating a quiet but impressive atmosphere. Another fine example of the Esoteric Buddhist art is the *Resurrection of the Buddha* (Pl. xiv), which is to be dated somewhere around 1100. It is a large painting slightly longer lengthwise, and is a unique work illustrating the story told in the Maka-maya-kyō (Mahāmāyā sūtra): that the Buddha Shaka, after attaining nirvāna, rose from his golden coffin and gave his last sermon for the sake of his mother, Lady Māyā. With the Buddha in the centre rising amidst golden rays of light, the dramatic scene is presented in a skilful composition. The strongly accentuated lines of black, used here and there in its detailed parts, attract our attention as an early influence of Chinese Sung art. This Sung influence began in the xth century to inspire animated, accentuated delineation in Japanese painting. The *Zennyō Ryūō* (dragon goddess) in the Kongōbu-ji, Wakayama, painted by Jōchi in 1145, is a good example.

Buddhist paintings from the xth century remain in considerable numbers, but only a few of them are clearly datable. In its first half there are the Jūni Ten (Twelve Guardians of the Buddhist Heaven) and the Go-dai-son (Five Great Rajas) in the Tō-ji, Kyōto (1127). Compared with the above-mentioned *Nirvāna* they are more decorative and "plain and clear". Along their line are the *Shaka* (Śākyamuni) in the Jingo-ji, Kyōto (Pl. xvii) and the *Fūgen Bosatsu* (Samantabhadra) in the Tōkyō National Museum (Pl. xvi), both from the mid-xth century. Tender, delicate and elaborate, they typify Buddhist painting in the late Fujiwara. The *Fūgen Emmyō* (Vajrāmogha-samayasattva) in the Matsunoo-dera, Kyōto (Pl. xviii) also shows the decorative style characterizing late Fujiwara painting, but its relatively light secondary colours indicate the influence of Sung art. The *Gusha Mandara* in the Tōdai-ji, Nara (Pl. xv, p. 9), portraying a group of deities associated with the Gusha Sect of Buddhism, represents a different type. Painted during the first half of the xth century, this follows the old style of the Nara Period; it is notable also that the figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas portrayed in this painting are similar to those in the *Hokkedō Kompon Mandara* mentioned before. The last glory of this century is the *Raigō of Amida and His Host* at Kōya, Wakayama (Pl. xix-xx, p. 12). This is a large-sized work consisting of three hanging scrolls. It shows a dramatic scene with the golden Amida in the centre, and his attendant heavenly beings around him playing music, dancing or clasping their hands in adoration, in flight down to the earth on trailing clouds. Its drawing is strong and its colours are bright, but the general style of its depiction lacks that rich, generous effect which characterizes earlier Fujiwara paintings. We find that the style of the following Kamakura Period is just making its appearance in this work.

Besides such images of deities, there are a few fine portraits of high priests. The portrait of Jion Daishi (Tz'u-ên) (632-682), T'ang priest and founder of the Hossō Sect, owned by the Yakushi-ji, Nara (Pl. xxi), dates from the mid-xth century. Although it is a copy from a T'ang painting, its soft delineation and bright colours manifest the style of the florescent Fujiwara. The portraits of Prince Shōtoku and Forefathers of Tendai Buddhism in the Ichijō-ji, Hyōgo (of which the Priest Zemmui (637-735) is reproduced in Pl. xxii), are placed in the early xth century. In style and technique they retain an antique effect, but compared with the Jion Daishi they are richer in decorative elements, attesting to a more advanced stage of Japanization. A different type is noticed in the portrait of the Priest Gonzō (758-827) (Pl. xxiii). Its delineation reveals a tendency toward stylization, which, together with the calligraphic style of its inscription, suggests the earliest part of the xth century. This, too, is a master work vividly portraying the high priest. There are also portraits of secular people, notably noblemen and high-ranking military officers, mostly associated with Buddhist sects or temples. The portraits of Minamoto Yoritomo (1147-1199) (Pl. xxiv) and others in the Jingo-ji, Kyōto, traditionally attributed to Fujiwara Takanobu (1142-1205), are eminent examples, though these should rather be called the early Kamakura (beginning of the xth century) than the late Fujiwara.

There remain only a few secular paintings, but they include very fine pieces. The screen painting

of landscape with figures in the Tō-ji, Kyōto (Pl. xxv), known as *Senzui Byōbu*, is important as the only existing specimen not only of screen-painting but also of contemporary *Kara-e* ("Chinese-style painting"). It was painted after a T'ang prototype during the second half of the xth century, but the quiet lines employed for mountains and trees and the beautiful bright colours in it are proofs of the general tendency toward an intrinsic Japanese taste. The *Yamato-e* ("Japanese-style painting"), as contrasted with the *Kara-e*, flourished in this period, notably in the early xth century. We know, from literary sources, that it was especially favoured among the nobility; unfortunately, there is no existing specimen of the epoch. However, we can imagine how they looked, through the seasonal aspects of landscapes described in the backgrounds of the *raigō* scenes on the previously mentioned doors of the Phoenix Hall, Byōdō-in, Kyōto.

It was in this period that paintings devoted to secular subjects, intended for the purpose of pure artistic appreciation, made their appearance. The xth century has left especially fine scroll-paintings in this field. The first to be mentioned among them is the *Genji Monogatari Emaki* (Pl. xxvi and xxvii). The *Genji Monogatari* (Tales of Genji) by Lady Murasaki is a novel dealing with romances of court nobles and ladies, and is famous as an excellent and voluminous work of Japanese literature in the Fujiwara Period. The *Genji Monogatari Emaki* (*emaki* meaning a picture scroll or scrolls) consists of extracts from the fifty-four chapters of the novel, and paintings illustrating the scenes described in them; the paintings as well as the text, written in flowing calligraphy on beautifully decorated paper, were intended for artistic entertainment. These paintings in rich bright colours, known as *tsukuri-e* (heavily painted decorative-style paintings), were probably done in the first half of the xth century by artists working for the Imperial Court. This work reveals several unique devices of *Yamato-e*: for example, the *fukinuke-yatai* ("roofless house"), showing the interior of a house in a bird's-eye view as if viewed through a hole in the ceiling, and the symbolic, simplified manner of portraying faces termed *hiki-me kagi-hana* (eyes of straight lines and nose of a hooked line). These are clever means of conveying the delicate, romantic atmosphere of the Heian nobility. Of a similar nature are the Fan-paper *Sūtras* (Pl. xxxii) made towards the end of the xth century. The fan-shaped sheets of paper are decorated with paintings of genre scenes, over which the text of the *Hokke-kyō* or Lotus Sūtra is copied in black ink. They are a variety of "decorated sūtras", but their importance is rather as specimens of early genre painting.

A new movement in painting contrasting with the *tsukuri-e*, which appeared in about the middle of the xth century, is represented by the *Shigisan Engi Emaki*. It is a set of three horizontal scrolls illustrating miraculous stories concerning the priest Myōren. He lived alone on the mountain called Shigisan, where he devoted his life to worshipping Bishamon Ten (Vaisravana), and worked various miracles. Unlike the *Genji Monogatari Emaki*, which consists of separate scenes, this shows uninterrupted sequences of successive scenes to develop the stories. It is remarkable that the many varied scenes are skilfully connected to constitute a beautifully continued entirety. Pl. xxviii illustrates the scene in which an alms bowl, sent through the air by Myōren's magic power, carries back to

his mountain-top cottage the granary from the house of a rich landlord, with the amazed villagers following it. Pl. XXIX is a later scene, showing rice bales flying back to the village out of the granary which remains on the mountain. The emphatic use of animated lines in them is successful in depicting the sights rich in motion. Paralleled in fame with this superb masterpiece is the *Tomo no dainagon Ekotoba* in three scrolls. It illustrates the stories about the conspiracy of the courtier Tomo-no-Yoshio, who set on fire the Imperial gate Ōten-mon in order to make a false accusation against his political opponent but was detected and punished with exile. This, too, is an excellent work of scroll-painting making effective use of the long-narrow art form. It is by a distinguished court artist of the second half of the xth century. Pl. xxx depicts citizens hastening to the scene of the fire, and Pl. xxxi the excitement of the crowd at the sight of the fire. Like the *Shigisan Engi Emaki* it vividly portrays the varied poses and faces of the multitude, and the effect of its colouring is also very fine.

A unique example of picture-scroll in black drawing is the *Chōjū Jimbutsu Giga* (Scrolls of Frolicking Animals or Animal Caricature Scrolls) attributed by tradition to the priest Kakuyū (1053-1114), more popularly known as Toba Sōjō. It is a set of four scrolls, of which the first (p. 17), showing monkeys, hares, frogs and other animals behaving as humans, and the second, portraying various birds and animals in their natural appearance, are especially fine. These two scrolls can be dated in the first half of the xth century. They attest to the artist's remarkable mastery in drawing, and their subjects as satires on human affairs of the time are also very interesting.

TAKAOKI MATSUSHITA

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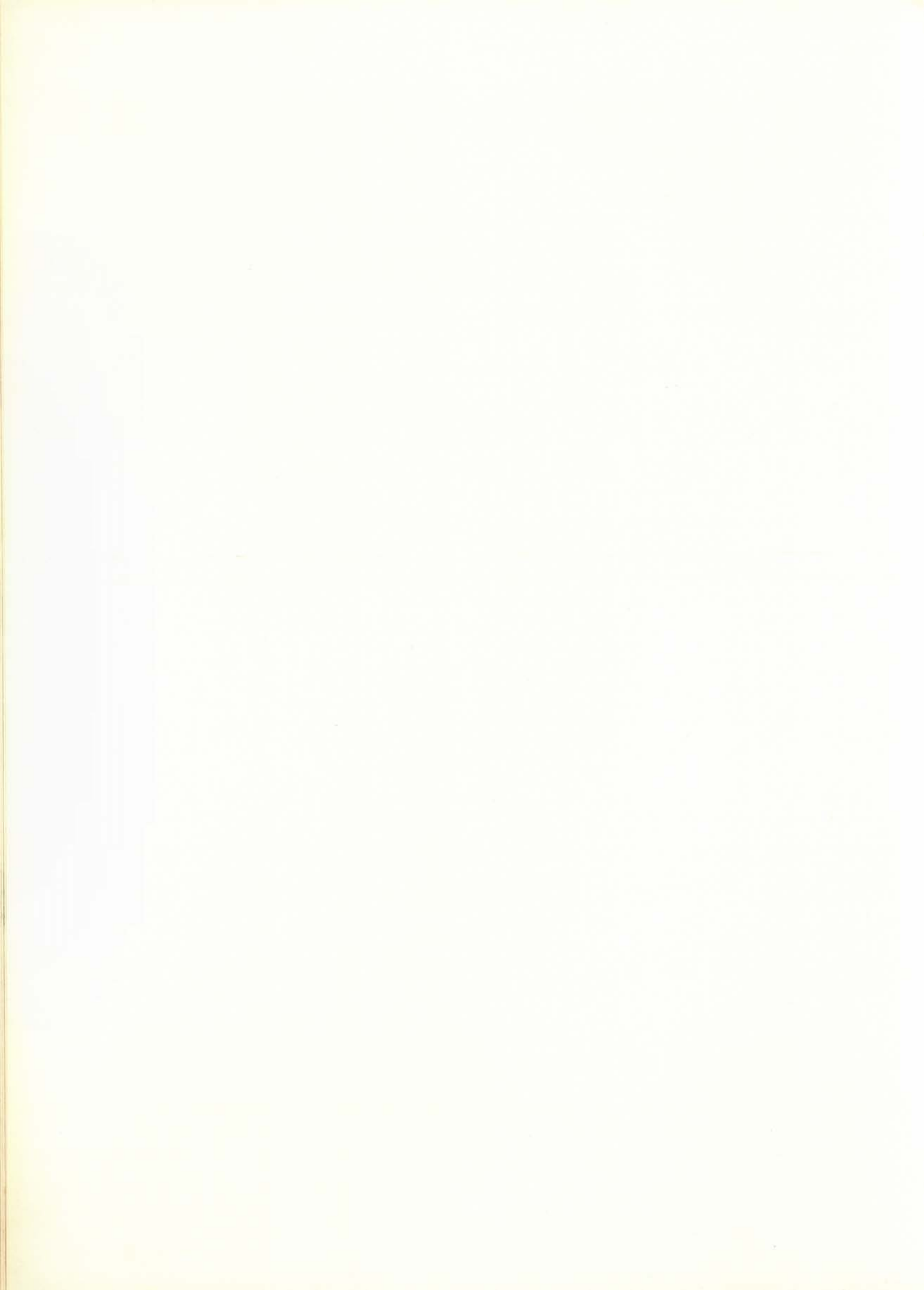
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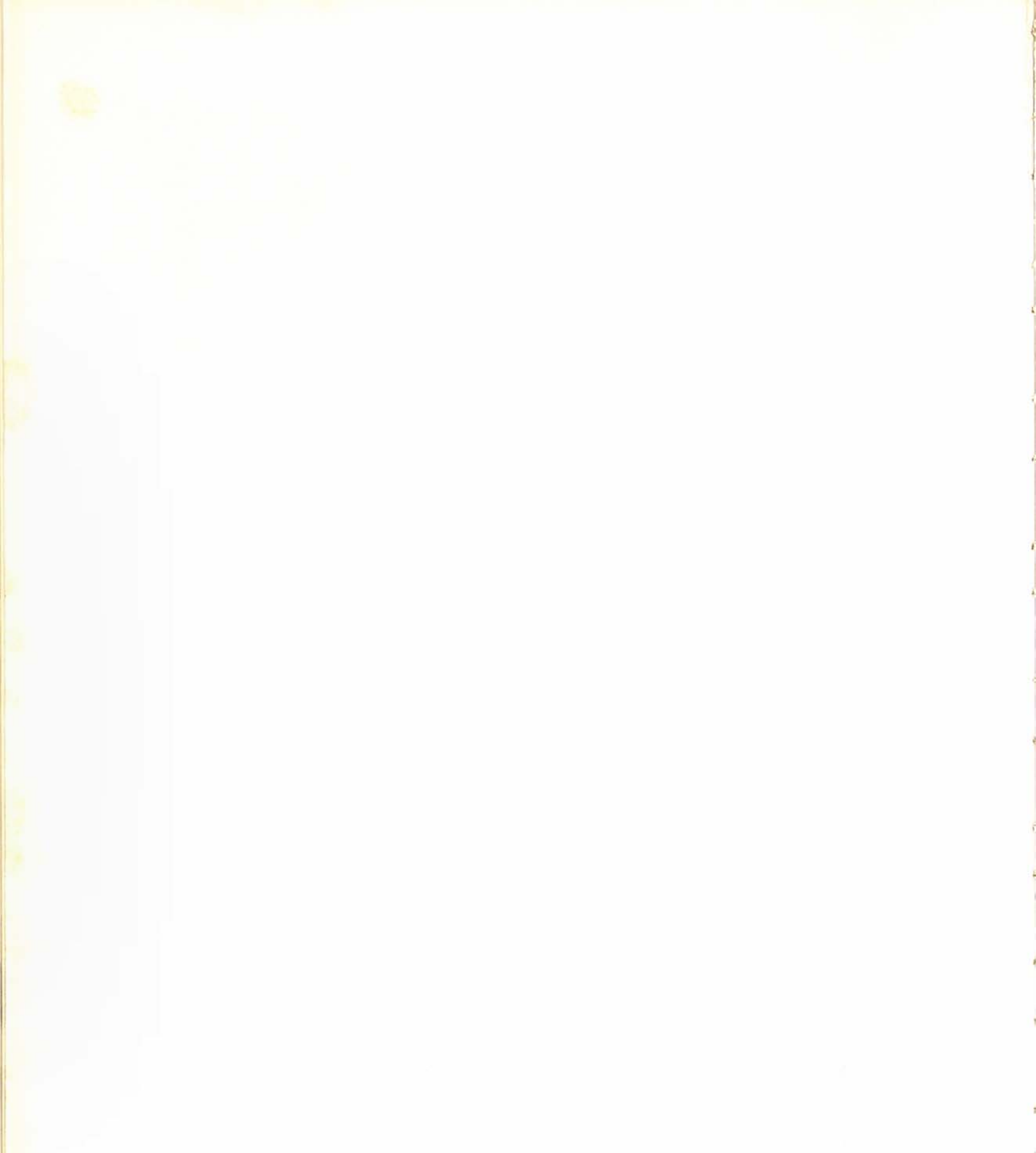
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Pl. II-b - Illustrated *Inga-kyō*: Prince Siddhārta riding out of the palace gate. Nara Period, VIII century. In colours on paper. Jōbon Rendai-ji, Kyōto.



樂欲輒出園林遊戲
王聞此語心生歡喜
而自念言太子當是
不樂在宮行夫婦礼
所以求出國林去耳
即便聽之勅諸羣臣
暫治園觀所經道路
皆令清淨太子即便
往至王所頭面礼足
辭出而去時王即便
勅一舊臣聰明智慧
善言辯者令從太子
今時太子與諸官屬
前後導從出城東門
國中人民聞太子出
男女盈路觀者如雲
時淨居天化作老人
頭白背偻拄杖羸步
太子即便問從者言
此為何人從者答曰
此老人也太子又問
何謂為老答曰此人



以一箭力射過七鼓
聞浮提中无能等者
云何令我為作師耶
今時白淨王聞此語
已心大歡喜而自念
言我子聰明書論筆
數四遠悉知而其射
藝四方人民未有知
者即勅太子及提婆
達多等五百童子又
復繫鼓唱令國界太
子薩婆悉達却後七
日當出後園欲試武
藝諸人民中有勇力
者可悉來此到第七
日提婆達多與六万
眷屬軍先出城于時
有一大鳥當城門住
此諸軍眾皆不敢前
提婆達多問諸人言
何故住此而不前耶
諸人答言有一大鳥

PL. III - Kongō-ku; one of Go Dai Rikiku, the Five Powerful
Bodhisattvas protecting the Buddha's Law. Heian Period, 11th-
12th century. In colours on silk. Kongōbu-ji, Wakayama. ►





PL. IV - Muijū Rikiku; one of Go Dai Rikiku, the Five Powerful Bodhisattvas protecting the Buddha's Law. Heian Period, 11th-12th century. In colours on silk. Kongōbu-ji, Wakayama. ►



Pl. V - Ryōkai Mandara, graphic hierarchic diagrams of Buddhist deities in Two
Circles, Taijō-kai (Garbhadhātu, "Womb Circle", the material) and Kongō-kai
(Vajradhātu, "Diamond Circle", the spiritual); portion of Rengebu-in Group in
Taijō-kai. Heian Period, ca. 900. In colours on silk. Kyōōgokoku-ji (Tō-ji), Kyōto. ►





Pl. VI - Dainichi (Vairocana), the supreme Buddha in Esoteric Buddhism, as the central deity of Taizō-kai; a portion of painting on board covering the central pillar of Five-storied Pagoda. Heian Period, 951. In colours on wood. Daigo-ji, Kyōto. ►



Pl. VII - Shichi Gutei Butsumo (Saptakotibuddha-matr), "mother of all Buddhas" in Taizō-kai: a portion of painting on board covering the central pillar of Five-storied Pagoda. Heian Period, 951. In colours on wood. Daigo-ji, Kyōto. ►



PL. VIII - Amida (Amitābha), the Buddha of Western Paradise; one of a set of three paintings showing the Amida Triad in raigō (coming down from heaven to receive his devotee to his paradise). Heian Period, xth century. In colours on silk. Hōke-ji, Nara.





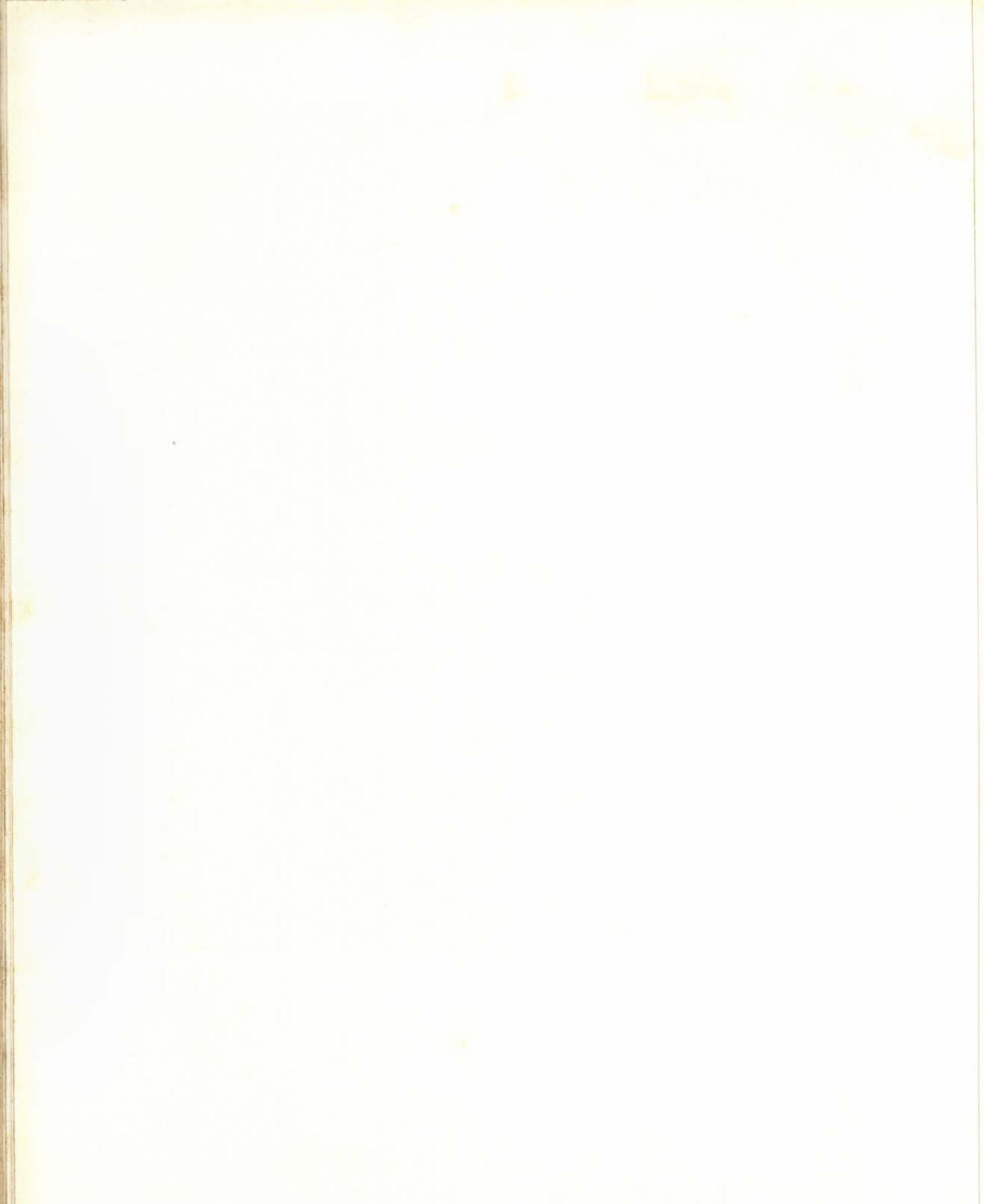
PL. IX - *Ao Fudō* (Blue Acala): portion showing Seitaka (Cetaka), one of
Fudō's two messengers. Heian Period, 13th century. Shōren-in, Kyōto. ►











Pt. XII - *Nirvāṇa, the death of the Buddha; portion showing a courtier and an attendant. Heian Period, 1086. In colours on silk. Kongōbu-ji, Wakayama.* ►





Pl. XIII - *Nirvāna, the death of the Buddha; portion showing an arhat (Buddha's disciple). Heian Period, 1086. In colours on silk. Kōgōbu-ji, Wakayama.* ►

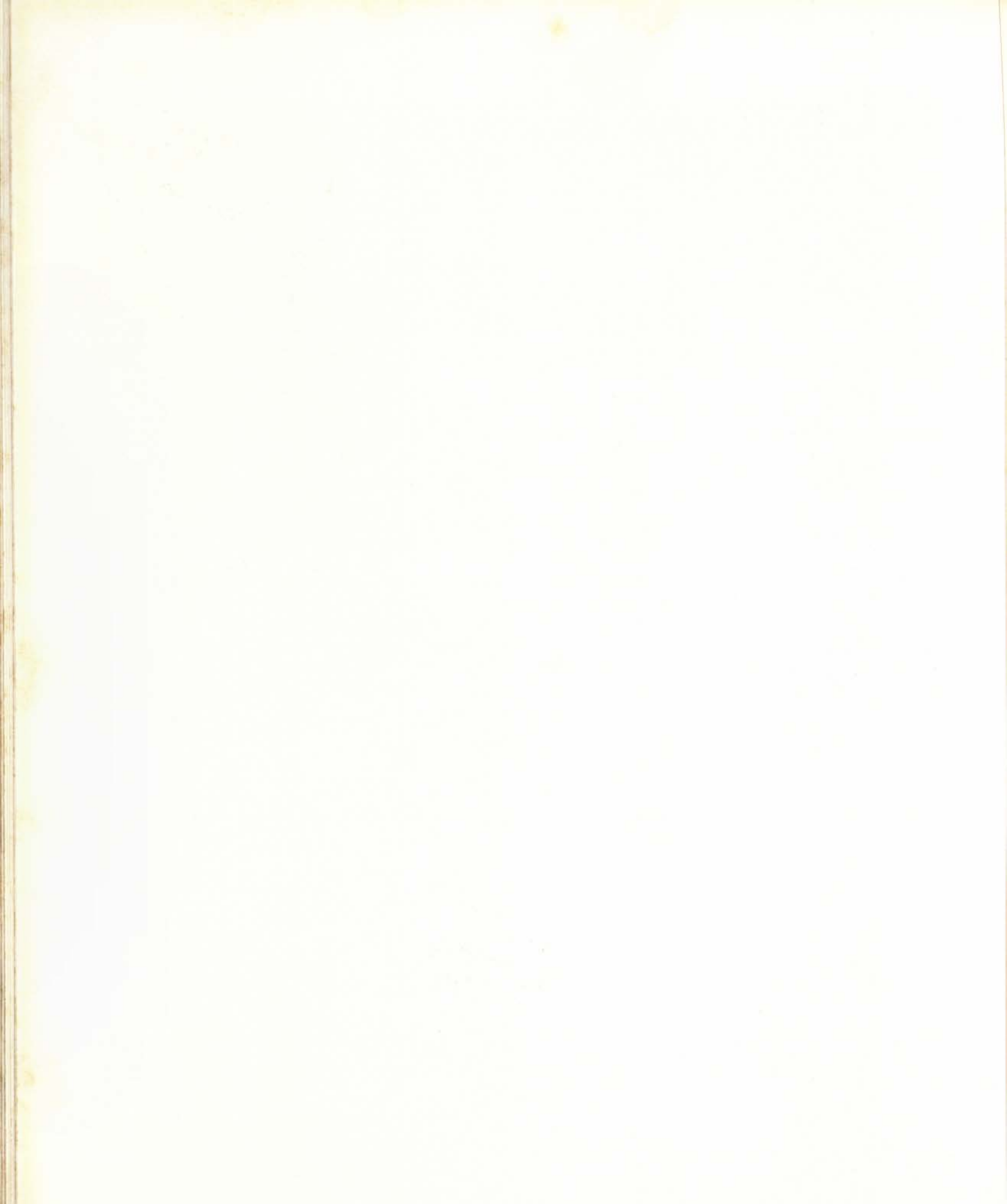




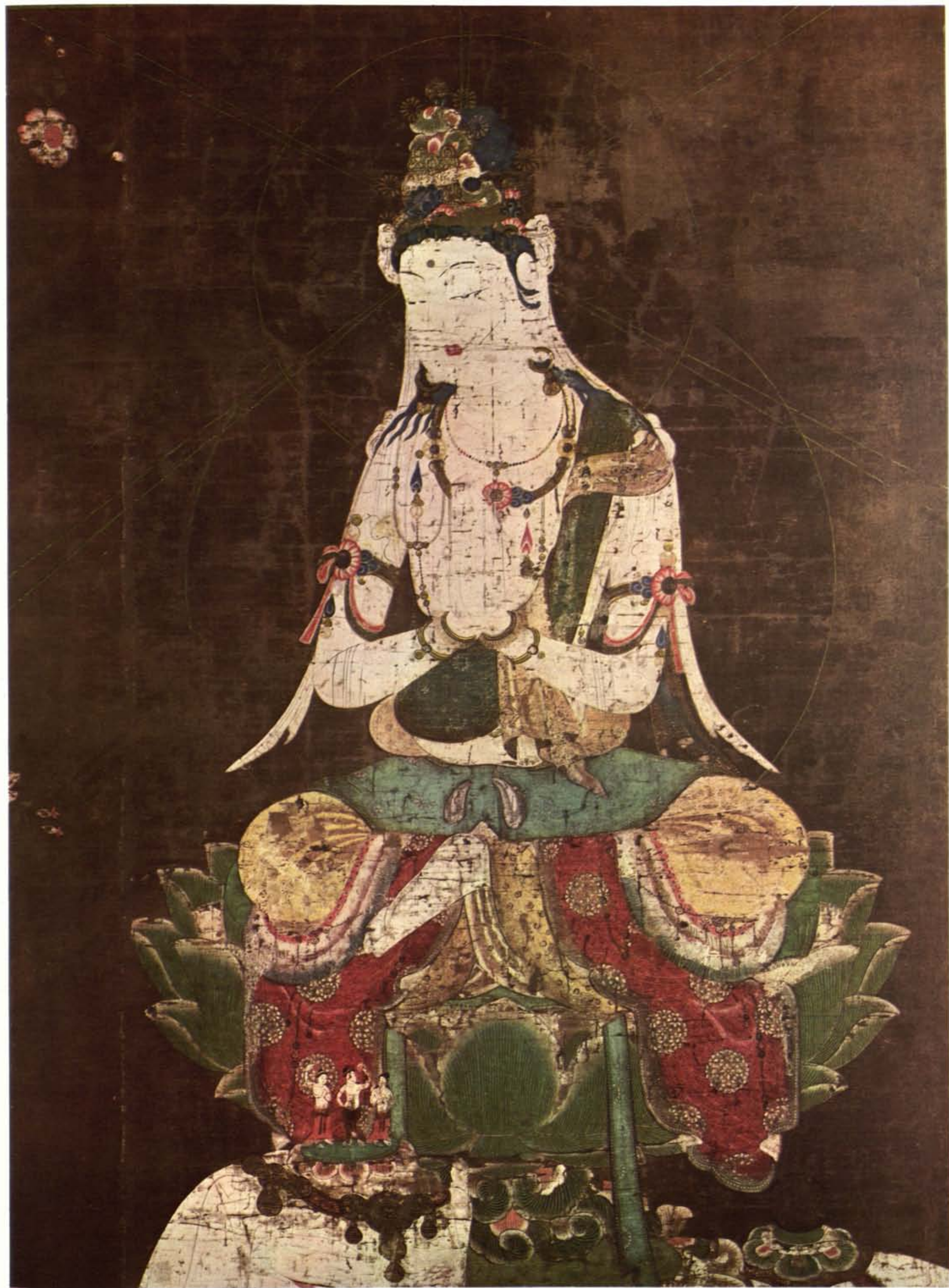
PL. XIV - Resurrection of the Buddha: portion showing the
Buddha Shaka (Sākyamuni) rising from his golden coffin. Heian
Period, 11th century. In colours on silk. Chūhō-ji, Kyōto. ►







Pl. XVI - Fūgen (Samantabhadra), the Bodhisattva protecting
believers in the Lotus Sūtra: central portion, Heian Period,
11th century. In colours on silk. Tōkyō National Museum. ►







PL. XVIII - Fūgen Emmyō (*Vajrāmogha-samaya-sattva*), a
manifestation of Fūgen; central portion, Heian Period,
xiii century. In colours on silk. Matsunoo-dera, Kyōto. ►





PL. XIX - *Raigō of Amida and His Host; portion showing Kannon (Avalokiteśvara), one of the two attendant Bodhisattvas to Amida, holding a lotus pedestal symbolizing a seat in Amida's Paradise. Heian Period, 11th century. In colours on silk. Yūshi Hachimankō Group of Monasteries, Kōya, Wakayama.* ►





Pl. XX - Raigō of Amida and His Host: portion showing heavenly beings playing music. Heian Period, 11th century. In colours on silk. Yūshi Hachimankō Group of Monasteries, Kōya, Wakayama. ►



此乃心傳耳一壁同
白口觀極唯識章除
伽等蹟一百餘部又
有通卦之愈其於
不卷山造正不山殊
修宮金家服又其以
服新免端云言其十
夕三永端二一冬十月
三日終一統統其大
元文冒高而兩張口
戶武臨之 迎然出群
妙同化知 永通人
以制心非 親觀大書
而靜清 法印之
官制襲日 昔海津梁
聊中讚嘆 孰能宣揚





PL. XXIII - The priest Gonzō, teacher of Priest Kūkai (founder of Shingon Sect of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan), giving a sermon. Heian Period, 11th century. In colours on silk. Fumon-in, Wakayama. ►







Pl. XXV - Portion of a screen-painting of landscape with figures, known as *Senzui Byōbu*, used as a background for initiation to Esoteric Buddhism. Heian Period, xth century. In colours on silk. Kyōōgokoku-ji (Tō-ji), Kyōto. ►





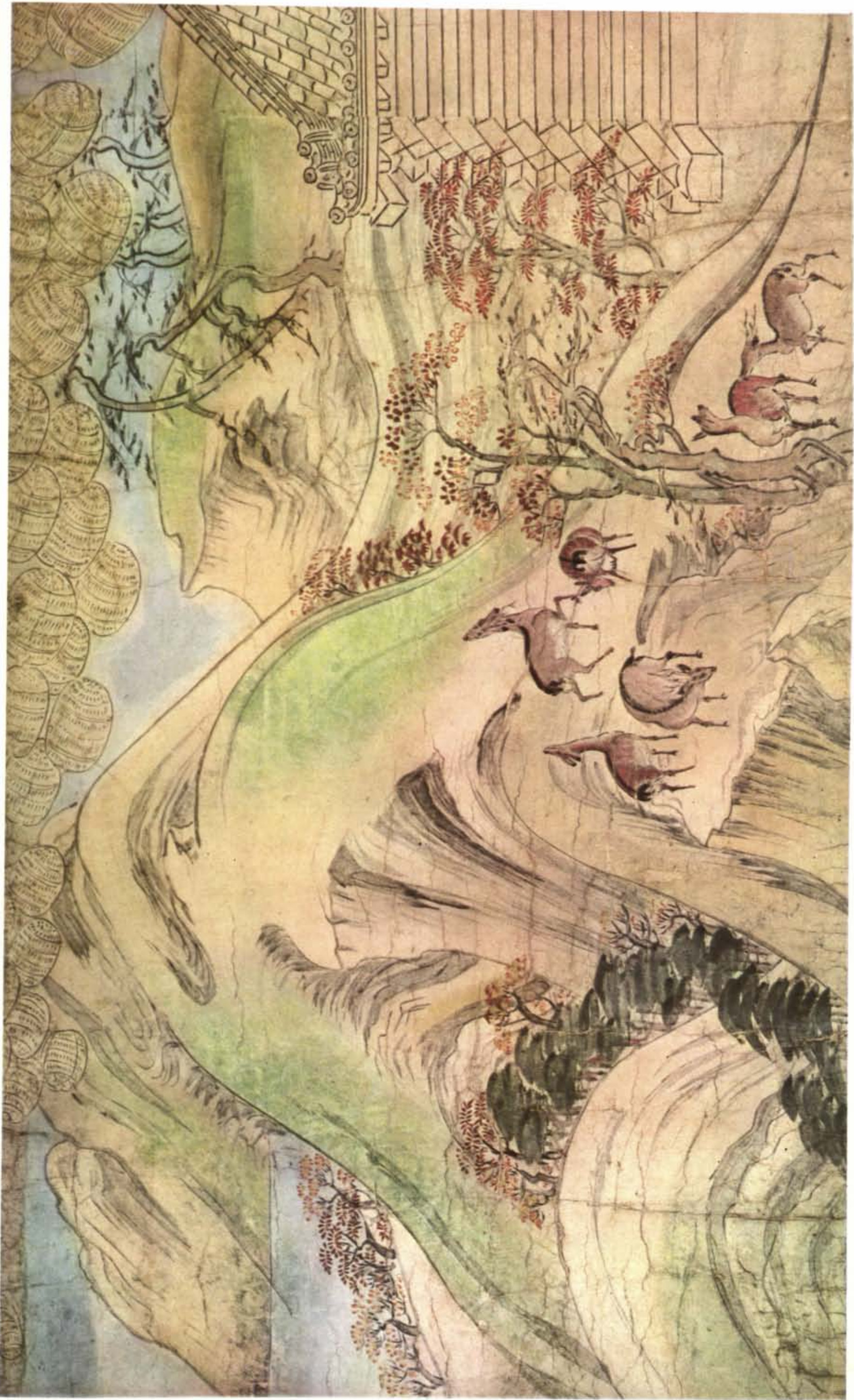




Pl. XXVIII - Shigisan Engi Emaki, scroll-painting illustrating legends concerning the priest Myōren: portion of the Scroll of the Flying Granary, showing the granary being carried through the air on an alms bowl sent by Myōren's magic power. Heian Period, 11th century. In colours on paper. Chōgōsonshi-ji, Nara. ►



Pl. XXIX - Shigisan Engi Emaki, scroll-painting illustrating legends concerning the priest Myōren: portion of the Scroll of the Flying Granary, showing rice bales being sent back through the air to the house of the landlord. Heian Period, XIII century. In colours on paper. Chōgosonshi-ji, Nara. ►

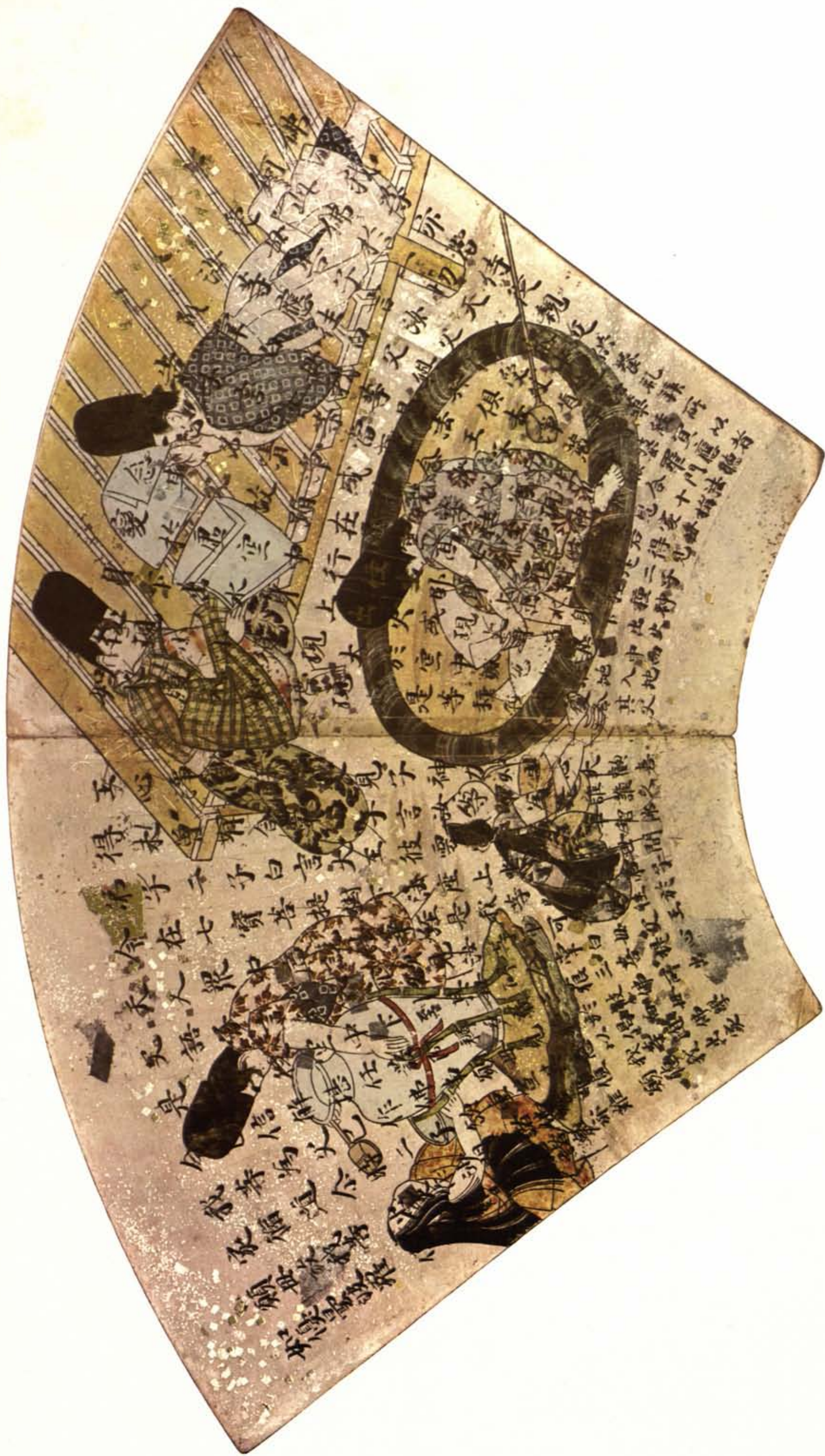


Pl. XXX - Tomo-no-dainagon Ekotoba, scroll-painting illustrating stories concerning the Dainagon Tomo-no-Yoshio's intrigue; portion showing people hurrying to the Imperial gate on fire. Heian Period, xiith century. In colours on paper. Sakai Collection, Tokyo.



Pl. XXXI - *Tomo-no-dainagon Ekotoba*, scroll-painting illustrating stories concerning the Dainagon Tomo-no-Yoshio's intrigue: portion showing the crowd in excitement at the sight of the fire. Heian Period, 11th century. In colours on paper. Sakai Collection, Tōkyō. ►







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